

THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

No. 42.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 18, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

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OR, IN THE NICK OF TIME.

BY HARRY MOORE.

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CHAPTER I.

A CRY FOR HELP.

"What was that?"

A horseman was riding along the road, a couple of miles from the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania.

The road at this point led through deep timber.

It was the month of April, 1778.

The Revolutionary War was in full blast.

The British were occupying Philadelphia; the patriot army was at Valley Forge.

The horseman in question was a young man of perhaps nineteen years of age.

He was a handsome, manly looking young fellow as one would wish to see.

He was dressed in a rough suit of homespun, wore a slouch hat, having several holes in it, and a rough pair of stoga shoes, also with holes in them.

The horse which the youth bestrode was a magnificent animal, jet black in color, and looking as though he might have some of the blood of the best Arabian stock in his veins.

This youth was one who, although a young fellow, had long since won his spurs.

His name was Dick Slater, and he was the captain of a company of youths of about his own age.

The members of this company were known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

They had done splendid work for the glorious cause.

They had fought bravely, aye, desperately, in many a hard-fought battle.

They were youths who knew not the meaning of the word fear.

They would charge a battery with a cheer, and approach the frowning mouths of the cannon without the least hesitation.

And their bravery even unto recklessness had been of inestimable value to the patriot army in many of these battles.

The magnificent courage of the youths, their dash and

enthusiasm had inspired the older men, and they, too, had fought with more vigor and energy than they otherwise would have done.

General Washington, the commander-in-chief of the patriot army, valued the services of the company of "Liberty Boys."

He knew the value of the youths.

Then, too, Dick Slater had made himself of immense value in another way.

He had proven himself to be a natural-born spy—not that there was anything of a secret, sneaking character in his make-up, but he was one who had no fear, and being very shrewd and cautious, and having the good of the cause at heart, he had turned out to be a splendid success as a spy.

Indeed, he had become known as "the champion spy of the Revolution."

And now on this beautiful afternoon on which we introduce him to the reader's notice, Dick Slater was on his way to Philadelphia to play the spy on the British, and learn, if possible, something regarding the plans of General Howe, the British commander-in-chief.

As Dick Slater uttered the exclamation with which we head this chapter, he drew rein, bringing his horse to a stop.

He assumed a listening attitude.

"Jove! I thought I heard a scream," the youth murmured; "it was in a shrill voice, like that of a woman, unless I am mistaken."

Then to the ears of the youth came the words:

"Help! Help! Murder!"

It was the voice of a woman, Dick was sure.

He stared around him in a puzzled manner.

"A murder is about to be committed," the youth murmured, "and I must stop it if possible. But where can the people be? The voice came from over toward the left here, and I will hasten in that direction. Maybe I may be successful in reaching the scene in time to prevent the crime from being committed."

Dick spurred his horse toward the timber at the left-hand side of the road.

There was so much underbrush at the point opposite

where he had paused that he could not ride into the timber there, so he moved along a little distance.

"Hallo!" the youth exclaimed, in a tone of satisfaction. "Here is a road!"

Dick guided his horse into the road, which was evidently not a public one.

"It is a private road, and undoubtedly leads to a house back in the timber," the youth thought; "and when I reach the end of this road I will find the person who uttered that cry for help."

Dick uttered this thought aloud, and then he spurred his horse forward at as rapid a pace as it was safe to go, the road winding and turning first one way then another, and keeping the rider on the lookout to keep his head from being knocked against trees or overhanging limbs.

Dick listened for a repetition of the scream, but it did not come.

"The villains, whoever they are, have put a stop to the crying out of the woman," thought Dick. "Have they murdered her, or simply gagged her?"

This was a question which, of course, he could not answer.

The youth was eager to find out, however.

He urged the horse forward.

He did not have very far to go—perhaps a third of a mile from the main road, in a straight line, but the way Dick was forced to go it was more than half a mile.

As Dick had expected, the road suddenly entered a clearing in the timber.

The clearing was partly a natural one, and had partly been made by the hands of man.

There were perhaps ten or twelve acres in the little clearing.

At the farther side stood a two-room log house.

As the clearing was oblong in shape, and twice as long as it was wide, and the house was at a point exactly opposite where the road entered, it was not far to the house.

Dick galloped across the clearing, his eyes wide open, and eager to see what was going on.

Near the west end of the cabin were three or four trees which had been left for shade, doubtless.

Under one of these trees—the largest—was a little group of men.

Dick counted them and found that there were five.

One of the five was bound to the tree, tight and fast.

He was a prisoner of the four.

Tied to another tree near at hand was a woman.

"She it was who cried out," thought Dick.

At a little distance from the woman, tied to still another tree was a girl of perhaps sixteen years of age.

Dick took all this in as he rode across the clearing, and he thought he understood the affair.

The four men were, no doubt, ruffians, lawless characters who, taking advantage of the fact that these were war times, were committing depredations.

"The scoundrels!" thought Dick, setting his teeth together in a grim fashion. "I will take a hand in this, and we will see about the matter!"

So busy were the four men, threatening the one tied to the tree, that they did not discover the approach of Dick until he was almost upon them; and then it was a glad cry from the lips of the woman that apprised them of the presence of some one.

The four men turned quickly, and, with snarls of rage, placed their hands on the butts of their pistols.

"Hallo! What is going on here?" cried Dick, paying no attention to this threatening movement.

The men glared at the youth for a few moments in silence.

They were sizing Dick up.

As he had anticipated, they seemed to make up their minds that he was not dangerous, for after a few moments' scrutiny they took their hands away from their pistols.

"I don't know as that is enny bizness of your'n, sonny!" replied one of the ruffians, with a sneer of contempt.

That the four were ruffians was evident.

They were dressed in rough suits of citizen's clothing, so were not British soldiers.

Their rough suits, stoga boots, and their red, bearded faces proclaimed them to be common ruffians.

"They are scoundrels—Tories, probably," thought Dick; "but these other people are certainly of a different sort."

This was a self-evident fact.

The man bound to the tree, while dressed in coarse clothing, and with a face almost as bewhiskered as those of the four, was still a rather good-looking man, and was evidently about forty-five years of age.

The woman was about forty, seemingly, and was very good-looking; doubtless in her younger days she had been handsome.

As Dick turned his eyes on the girl, he could hardly repress a start of amazement and an exclamation of admiration.

The maiden was one of the sweetest, prettiest and daintiest that he had ever seen, and her coarse, cotton dress seemed to enhance rather than detract from her wonderful beauty.

These things Dick saw at a glance—much quicker than it has taken us to tell it.

And when he saw the rude manner in which the woman and girl had been bound to the trees, the youth's blood boiled with anger and he made up his mind that he would take a hand in this affair, and would free the three and give the four ruffians a lesson such as they were undoubtedly needing, and which would not be forgotten by them in many a long day.

And Dick had no doubt of his ability to do this.

Although he had no weapons showing, he was well armed.

Around under the skirts of his coat were two pistols and a long-bladed knife.

The fact that Dick was a youth, and was unarmed—so they thought—made the four ruffians look upon him with contempt.

They did not think that he could do anything.

Even though he might wish to do so, he would not dare attempt to fight four men like themselves.

This was what they thought, but it was because they did not know who Dick was.

Had they known that he was a veteran of the war, a youth with a reputation as a fighter second to no man in the entire patriot army, that because of his daring and utter fearlessness he had been called "The Champion Spy of the Revolution," they might have thought differently regarding the youth.

They sized him up as a country youth of the neighborhood—though they were men who knew a good many in that part of the country.

When one of the ruffians said, in response to Dick's question as to what was going on there, "I don't know ez thet is enny bizness uv your'n, sonny!" Dick looked at him in an extremely innocent and guileless manner, and said:

"Oh, is that so, mister?"

"Yes, thet's so!"

"But say, stranger, one can't help feeling a bit curious regarding this matter," said Dick. "What does it mean, anyway?"

"I hev alreddy tole ye et hain't none uv yer bizness!" fiercely. "An' ef ye know when ye're well off, ye'll git erway frum heer ez quick ez ye know how!"

"Yes, you had better go on, young man," said the man who was bound to the tree; "they are conscienceless brutes, and if they should take a notion they would murder you as likely as not."

"What are they doing to you?" the youth asked.

"They have gotten the idea into their heads that I have some money hidden, and they are trying to force me to tell where," was the quiet reply.

"Yes, an' we'll kill ye, Sam Bundy, jes' ez shore ez ye

liv', ef ye don't tell us whur ye hev hid ther gold!" one of the brutes declared, viciously.

"Oh, save him!—save my husband!" moaned the woman, looking appealingly at Dick.

The girl, too, gazed beseechingly at the youth.

Dick's heart bled for the two, and as his gaze wandered back to the faces of the four ruffians, a feeling of fierce anger took possession of the youth.

The ruffians laughed boisterously as the woman finished speaking.

"Ho, ho, ho! I reckon this hyar youngster won't do much toward savin' uv yer husban', ole woman!" sneered one. "The bes' thing he kin do is ter git up an' git out uv hyar, fur ef he don't, he's lierble ter git inter er heap uv trubble, I'm thinkin'!"

"Oh, you think I had better get out of this, do you?" asked Dick, in a quiet tone.

There was a peculiar glint in the youth's eyes, however, which would have warned men of more intelligence that danger threatened.

The ruffians never suspected anything of the kind, however.

"Yas, thet's whut I sed, young feller, an' I meant et, too!"

"Oh, you did?"

Still the calm, quiet tone and deeper the dangerous glow in the handsome eyes.

The explosion was near at hand.

Dick was holding himself in check by a great effort.

The ruffian became angry.

"Uv course thet is whut I sed, cuss ye!" he cried, in a rage. "An' now I don't want enny more words outer ye—git!" and he pointed across the clearing toward the road.

Dick paid no attention to the man or his words.

Instead, he looked at the man bound to the tree, and said:

"I suppose you know these men, sir?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply; "they have lived in this part of the country for a number of years."

"I suppose you don't know any good of them?"

The man looked surprised, and gave the youth a sharp glance.

The ruffians were surprised, also, and so amazed were they at the impudence, as they mentally termed it, of the youth, that they stood there, with underjaws dropped, and stared at him.

"I can't say that I know any good of them," the man replied; "in fact, I think I can truthfully say that three bigger rascals could not be found in all Pennsylvania."

Curses, low but deep, escaped the lips of the four, and they whirled upon the man with snarls of rage.

"Oh, ye'll suffer fur thet!" one howled. "Ye'll suffer fur thet!"

"And you fellows are going to suffer for this cowardly work of yours, too!" spoke a calm, even voice, and the four whirled back—to find themselves looking down the muzzles of two dangerous-looking pistols held in the hands of the youth whom they had regarded with such scorn.

"Rather a surprise, isn't it, gentlemen?" asked Dick, in the calmest tone imaginable; and there was a pleasant smile on his face.

CHAPTER II.

DICK ROUTS THE RUFFIANS.

That it was a surprise was evident.

The ruffians stared in the mouths of the pistols, and as they did so a look of terror came into their eyes.

They shrunk back.

Then their hands dropped on the butts of their pistols.

Dick saw the movement.

"Don't you do it!" he cried, sharply and sternly. "Don't attempt to draw your weapons, or I will shoot you down!"

The ruffians hesitated.

The man and the woman and girl watched the thrilling scene, with bated breath.

They were as surprised as the ruffians had been.

They had not expected that the youth would dare to interfere in their behalf at all; and now, to have him not only interfere, but get the advantage of the four in such a neat manner was something that pleased them greatly.

They feared, however, that in the end the youth would lose his life.

They did not think he could hope to successfully fight four desperadoes such as they knew the four were.

But they did not know Dick Slater.

It was not the first time that he had encountered ruffians of the same stripe as those now before him.

Neither was it the first time that he had been pitted against such odds.

He felt confident that he would be able to not only hold his own, but to defeat the rascals and put them to flight.

When Dick ordered the four to not attempt to draw their weapons, they stood and looked at the youth irresolutely.

"Quick, take your hands away from your pistols, or I will open fire!" Dick cried, sternly.

The men still hesitated, and glanced questioningly at each other.

Then the one who seemed to be the leader dropped his hand from the pistol butt.

The others, seeing his action, followed suit.

"See here, young feller," the leader of the four said, "don't ye know thet ye're takin' yer life in yer han's in darin' ter set yerself up ag'in' us four fellers?"

Dick shook his head.

"I am not aware of it," he remarked, calmly.

"Waal, et's er fac'."

"Is that so?"

"Yas; I reckon ye don't know who we air, do ye?"

"Haven't the least idea."

"Waal, we're four uv ther wurst men there air in this part uv ther kentry."

"I don't doubt it," promptly. "You look it."

Dark frowns came over the faces of the ruffians.

They did not fancy being spoken to in this manner.

Looks of wonder and admiration appeared on the faces of the three who were bound to the trees.

"How brave he is!" thought the maiden. "And how handsome and noble-looking, but I am afraid they will murder him."

As for Dick Slater, he did not seem to have any fear on his score.

His face was calm and unruffled.

His keen eyes watched every move the ruffians made.

"See here, young feller, ye're altogether too sassy!" growled the leading ruffian.

"Do you think so?"

"Yas, an' we don't like et, I kin tell ye."

"Oh, you don't?"

Dick's tone was cool and tantalizing in the extreme.

"No, we don't; an' ef ye know when ye air well off ye'll keep er civil tongue in yer head. Don't ye see we're four ter one?"

Dick nodded.

"Oh, yes, I see that."

He spoke in the most matter-of-fact manner imaginable.

"Waal, four ter one is too big odds fur ye ter fight ag'in'."

Dick shook his head, dissenting.

"Oh, no," he said, "there are odds of four to one against me, it is true, but I have my pistols out and have you covered, which at least equalizes matters; before you could get your pistols out, I could shoot two of you down, and I assure you that I shall not hesitate to do this if you force

me to it. If you value your lives you will not attempt to show fight, but will do just as I tell you."

The four stared at the youth in amazement.

They could hardly believe it possible that the youth was in earnest.

There was a grim look on the youth's face, however, and a peculiar glitter in his eye which the ruffians did not like.

A feeling that the young man meant what he said began to grow upon them.

They looked at each other in an undecided manner.

Dick made up his mind to terminate the affair at once.

He knew that the situation of the three prisoners, bound as they were with rough ropes, must be very uncomfortable.

He wished to free them at the earliest possible moment.

Dick watched the four closely for a few moments, and then said:

"I have no more time to waste; I am going to order you fellows to leave this place, and if you do not do so, it will be the worse for you. I do not wish to kill you, but if you force me to, I shall have no hesitancy in doing so; I am going to give you until I count twenty to get started away from here, and if at the end of that time you have made no movement toward going, then I shall shoot two of you dead in your tracks and go for the other two in a manner that will make them think an earthquake is doing business in this vicinity."

The youth's tone was calm, his air quiet, but somehow the men felt that he meant just what he said, and that he would be as good as his word.

The four ruffians hated to be beaten thus by one person, and that person a youth not yet out of his teens.

They saw no way of getting out of having to obey the youth's command.

They were eager to turn the tables on the youth, however.

They fairly trembled with rage at being held under control thus by a beardless youth.

A sudden thought came to the fellows almost simultaneously, however.

They looked at each other, meaningly.

There was a peculiar expression in their eyes.

This was not lost upon Dick.

A shrewder, keener-witted youth never drew the breath of life.

He saw the exchange of looks and realized that the ruffians had some sort of a trick in mind.

"They think to catch me napping," he said to himself, "but if they do, they will have to prove themselves to be a great deal smarter than I think they are; I wonder now what trick they will try to play?"

Dick's quick mind went to work on the problem at once.

"Ah, I have it!" he exclaimed to himself, presently.

"I think I know what their game will be—in fact, I am sure that I know. Very well, I shall be ready for them, and if they suffer as a result, they will have only themselves to blame for it."

Then he addressed the ruffians aloud:

"You heard what I said a few moments ago, and now, are you going to go peaceably, or shall I be forced to kill two or three of you?"

"Oh, I reckon we will go, all right enough," growled the spokesman of the four; "we hain't blamed fools ter wanter git shot ter death by er youngster like you."

"Very good; I am going to begin counting now, and I wish to give you fair warning that if you try any tricks you will get the worst of it. You ought to be thankful that I let you go, after what you have done here. You ought, by rights, to be strung up to limbs and be left to dance on nothing."

"Mebby ye think so, but we don't."

"Oh, I suppose not. It is hardly to be expected that you would look at the matter in that light. You are prejudiced in your own favor."

"Waal, we hain't ergoin' ter try no tricks, so ye needn't git thet inter yer noggin'."

"See that you do not."

Then Dick began counting.

The ruffians turned and started to walk away.

They took only three or four steps and then suddenly jerked their pistols out of their belts and whirled around, eager to shed the blood of the youth who had got the better of them in such a signal manner.

Dick was not taken unawares.

This was the very trick which he had made up his mind they would try to play, and he was ready for them.

Quick as a flash he fired two shots.

Two of the ruffians dropped their pistols and gave utterance to wild howls of pain and rage.

One was hard hit, the bullet having struck him in the chest, and he fell to the ground.

The other was not seriously wounded, but slight as the wound was it took all the fight out of him, and, with a yell of fear, he leaped around the corner of the cabin and disappeared in the timber.

Meanwhile, Dick had not been idle.

He knew that the other two ruffians would fire on him, and quick as a flash he threw himself off his horse on the opposite side from that on which were his enemies.

As he did so, the ruffians fired.

The bullets cut the air in the spot where Dick's body had just been, but, of course, did no harm.

Quick as a flash Dick was around the house, and he leaped toward the ruffians, with the ferocity of a tiger.

The fellows were making frantic efforts to draw their other pistols.

They were practically off guard and were easy marks for one as expert with his fists as was Dick.

Dick's fists shot out, first the right and then the left.

Crack! Smack!

The fists struck the marks for which they were aimed—the ruffians' jaws.

Down the fellows went at full length upon the ground.

The spectators, the three bound to the trees, were delighted.

"Good for you, young man!" the man cried. "Keep your advantage now, don't let the scoundrels get up."

"No; they will kill you if you do!" the woman cried.

"Glorious!" cried the girl. "Oh, I wouldn't care if you had killed the scoundrels."

"Never fear, sir," said Dick; "I can handle the ruffians."

"I believe you can," was the admiring reply.

Dick quickly proved that this was so.

When the ruffians attempted to scramble to their feet, he promptly knocked them down again.

They tried this several times, with the same result each time, and realizing that they had met their master, the ruffians desisted from their attempts and lay there, glaring up at the youth, with looks of rage and disgust on their ugly faces.

"Come, come, gentlemen," said Dick, briskly, "get up and let me knock you down again."

"We hain't ergoin' ter do nothin' uv ther kind," was the sulky reply from one; "we know when we've got er-nuff, we hain't no hogs, no way ye kin fix et."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Dick. "You haven't had half enough yet."

"Waal, now, we hev, yer bet."

"You don't want any more, then?"

"No, siree, not any."

"Oh, all right; just as you say. I am a very accommodating young man, however, and will keep this thing up longer, if you like."

"I tell ye, we don't want enny more."

"Oh, all right."

Each of the ruffians still had a loaded pistol in his belt.

Dick stepped forward and possessed himself of the pistols, the ruffians making no effort to prevent him from doing so.

They were beaten, and there was no fight left in them.

They felt that it would be useless to try to prevent the wonderful youth from doing as he wished.

"Now, you fellows lie there till I tell you to get up!" Dick ordered.

Then he drew his knife, and, stepping to the tree, cut the ropes binding the man; to do the same with the woman and the girl took but a few moments, and then the youth walked back to where the ruffians lay.

"Get up!" he commanded.

He emphasized his commands with a couple of vigorous kicks, and the ruffians lost no time in scrambling to their feet.

They glared at Dick with eyes of hate, but it did not bother him in the least.

"Oh, glare all you want to, you black-muzzled scoundrels!" he laughed. "You ought, however, to be thanking your lucky stars that you are not in the condition of your partner, there!" and Dick indicated the wounded man, who lay, groaning, where he had fallen.

Then Dick turned to the man whose rescue he had effected.

"What shall we do with these scoundrels, Mr. Bundy?" he asked.

He had learned the man's name through hearing the ruffians speak it.

The man knitted his brows and gazed at the two ruffians and their wounded comrades, in a reflective manner.

"Well, I hardly know," he said, "but I am inclined to think they have been punished sufficiently, so if you have no objections I would be for letting them go."

"It is nothing to me," said Dick; "I am quite willing to leave it entirely to you; I have enjoyed myself hugely, and have no complaint whatever to make."

"You are a brave and noble youth!" the man exclaimed, in earnest tones.

"Indeed you are!" the woman declared.

"Yes, yes!" the girl cried, in eager tones, and she gave Dick a look from her beautiful eyes which made his heart beat faster in spite of him.

The look thrilled him, through and through.

The ruffians glared from one to another of the speakers in an angry and sullen manner.

It was plain that they did not appreciate what was being said to Dick.

The youth blushed to his ears.

He was as modest as he was brave, and open praise always embarrassed him.

"Oh, I guess you value my services too high," he remarked.

"Not at all," the man declared; "you have accomplished what seemed to be the impossible."

"But what about these men?" asked Dick, anxious to change the subject.

"We will let them go free."

"Make them promise that they will never bother us again, Sam," suggested the woman.

"That would do no good, mother," said the girl; "they would not keep their promise."

"I think Lucy is right," Mr. Bundy said; "they would not keep their promise, so it would be a waste of time to make them give it. It would be useless, anyway, for I shall be on my guard hereafter and the scoundrels will not be able to take me unawares again."

"Certainly such fellows as these would think nothing of breaking a promise," agreed Dick; "so you might as well let them go with the warning that if they ever set foot in this clearing again you will shoot them without mercy."

"That's just what I will do!" declared Mr. Bundy. "And," shaking his finger at the ruffians in a threatening manner, "you will do well to remember that, too, you black-muzzled scoundrels!"

The ruffians growled something under their breath, but made no reply that was intelligible.

"Oh, say, kain't ye do sumthin' fur me?" groaned the wounded man, at this juncture.

"How do you feel, Jack?" asked one of his comrades, bending over him.

"Oh, I'm done fur, I reckon; I'm purty hard hit."

"Oh, I reckon ye'll come out all right, old man," the other replied. "Do ye think ye can walk ter ther cabin?"

"I dunno; I'm moughty weak."

"Waal, s'posin' ye try; Jim an' me'll walk alongside uv ye an' he'p ye all we kin. We kin moughty near kerry yer weight, an' all ye'll hev to do'll be ter work yer legs."

"All right, I'll try et."

The two men assisted their wounded comrade, and with many groans and a few muttered curses, he managed to get to his feet.

"Now see ef ye kin walk, with me'n Jim a-he'pin' ye," the one who had done most of the talking said.

The fellow obeyed, and managed to move along at a fair pace, everything considered; of course, his comrades almost carried him along, and, as the fellow had said, about all that the wounded man had to do was to work his legs.

Dick and his three companions watched the three till they were out of sight in the timber, and then the man turned to the youth and said:

"Allow me to thank you, young man, for what you have

done for us. I really believe you have saved my life, and also the lives of my wife and daughter."

"Don't thank me," said Dick; "I was only too glad to be of service to you, I assure you. You are more than welcome for all I have done."

"I am sure of that; but by what name may we know you?"

"My name is Dick Slater."

The man started.

"What! Not Dick Slater, the patriot soldier and spy, of whom so much has been said!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER III.

SOME REDCOATS ARRIVE.

At this instant a startled cry escaped the lips of the girl.

"Look yonder!" she cried, pointing.

All looked in the direction indicated, and saw a party of five British soldiers riding across the clearing toward the house.

"Don't mention my name!" said Dick, in a low, cautious tone of voice. "If they were to discover who I am it would mean my death or capture."

"I understand," was the man's cautious reply; "we will not mention your name."

"I am Tom Rockett, a neighbor's boy—you understand?"

"Yes, yes!"

The soldiers were near at hand now, and it would be unsafe to say more.

"Hello, what has been going on here?" asked the leader of the redcoats, in an imperious, arrogant tone of voice.

He wore the uniform of a captain.

He was a dark-faced, wicked-looking fellow, and Dick, who was an excellent judge, set him down as a scoundrel of the worst kind.

"Unless I am mistaken, Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter have got out of the fire only to flop into the frying-pan," the youth thought; and, thinking thus, he edged around so as to be where he could have a good chance to get in some lively work, if it became necessary.

Dick, dressed in the suit of a country youth, did not look dangerous, and the redcoats did not pay much attention to him.

The youth was glad of one thing: He had reloaded his pistols while talking with Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter, and now he had his two pistols and the two he

had taken from the two men, safely in his belt, but back under the skirts of his coat where they could not be seen.

As the captain of the redcoats asked the question, the five having reined up their horses, his eyes fell upon the face of the girl and he gave a start.

Dick, who was watching the man closely, saw a light come into the fellow's eyes which he did not like.

"Aha!" the captain cried, without waiting for an answer to his question, "a rose amid the thorns, eh?—an angel in this wilderness! Phew! but isn't she a sweet little darling, though!"

Dick's blood boiled, but he restrained himself and resisted the inclination to put a bullet through the redcoat.

"I think that will come soon enough, anyway," he thought.

Mr. Bundy was far from being a fool.

He sized the captain up in just about the same fashion that Dick had done.

He flushed with anger when the man spoke of his daughter in such a bold, insolent way, but he forced himself to speak in a calm and respectful manner, as there were five of the redcoats, and he felt that he was helpless and entirely within their power, and realized that it would be best not to anger them if he could avoid it.

"We've been having a little trouble with a gang of ruffians," Mr. Bundy said.

"Trouble with a gang of ruffians, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are the ruffians now? Is this one of them?" indicating Dick.

"That's all right, I'll try to pay you off for that," thought Dick, grimly; "you may think you're smart, and that because you are a captain in the British army you are a great personage, but you are sadly mistaken."

"No, he's a friend," Mr. Bundy replied; "he is a neighbor's boy."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes, sir."

"But about those ruffians you speak of, did you have a fight with them? We heard shots—indeed, that is what guided us hither—and I see blood there on the ground."

"Yes, there was an exchange of shots, and we succeeded in wounding one of the fellows."

"Then they ran, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Humph! They must have been awful cowards to run from one man."

"But the boy here helped me."

"Bah! I don't suppose he did much; those fellows must have been terrible cowards."

Dick was angry, but he felt that the time had not yet come for him to put in.

"When I do say something, though, I'll talk straight from the shoulder," he said to himself, grimly.

"Well, I don't suppose they were the bravest men in the world," said Mr. Bundy, in response to the redcoat's remark.

"I should say not. By the way, what is your name?"

"Bundy, sir, Samuel Bundy."

"Ah, yes; glad to know you, Mr. Bundy. Is that magnificent young creature, yonder, your daughter?"

Mr. Bundy's eyes flashed slightly, while his wife's face paled, and an angry flush appeared on the girl's countenance.

The tone in which the captain spoke and the bold manner in which he gazed at the girl, were offensive in the extreme.

Dick felt like putting a bullet through the redcoat.

"The scoundrel!" he thought. "I have a sweetheart and a sister of my own, and I will not stand idly here and see him offer insult to that beautiful girl."

"Yes, she is my daughter."

"Um! yes. What is her name?"

"Lucy."

"It ought to be Queenie. Jove! she is certainly a queen among maidens. She is the sweetest dewdrop I have seen since I set foot in this beastly country, and as I have been deprived of all such luxuries for a long time, I am going to have a kiss. Lucy, come here!"

The girl turned crimson and then pale, and looked imploringly at her father, and then, quick as a flash, at Dick.

"You will pardon me," said Mr. Bundy, in an apologetic tone of voice, "but really you must not talk like that. My daughter is a lady, and you have no right to ask such a thing of her."

"Bah! I don't ask it; I command it! Come here!"

The captain spoke as he would have spoken to a dog, and made an imperious gesture with his hand.

Dick's blood was now at boiling heat.

It had been only by the hardest kind of work that he had kept quiet, so far, and now he thought it time for him to take a hand.

The look the beautiful girl had given him had gone straight to his heart.

"The beast shall not pollute her pure lips, if I can help it," he said to himself; "I'll keep him from putting his purpose through to a successful issue, or die trying! Her father, too, is ready to fight to the death to save his daughter from insult, and I think we can make things very lively for these gay redcoats."

So now when the redcoat captain spoke to the girl in a tone of command, such as he would use to a dog, Dick could stand it no longer; and leaping forward, confronted the fellow.

"You cowardly scoundrel!" the youth cried. "The best thing you can do is to get away from here, and as quickly as possible, too!"

A little cry of fear escaped Mrs. Bundy, while Lucy clasped her hands and grew as pale as death.

"He will be killed!" she thought.

The face of the redcoat captain grew dark with anger.

Involuntarily he dropped his hand on the hilt of his sword.

Quick as a flash Dick drew his pistols and leveled them.

"Don't attempt to draw your saber!" he cried, in a ringing voice. "If you do, I will put a bullet through you!"

The captain, like all bullies and would-be mashers, was a coward at heart.

He took his hand away from the sword hilt in a hurry.

He glared at Dick with the ferocity of a tiger.

If looks would kill, Dick would have fallen dead.

Dick met the redcoat's gaze unflinchingly, however.

"If either of your men attempt to draw a weapon, I will fire instantly," said Dick, "and I give you my word that I am a dead shot and that I shall shoot to kill."

The captain forced a laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, you're a regular gamecock, aren't you?" he cried, sneeringly.

"Well, now, I'm not much of a hand at blowing my own horn," said Dick, quietly, "but I will say this, that I usually manage to keep my end up in almost any kind of company, and unless you give up your idea of offering insult to that young lady, I shall give you one of the biggest kind of fights."

"What is it to you?" growled the captain. "Or is she your sweetheart?" he added.

Dick shook his head.

"No, she's not my sweetheart," he replied.

"Then why trouble yourself about the matter?"

"I'll tell you why;" and the youth's voice grew stern, and a peculiar glint appeared in his eyes. "I have a sister up in New York State, a girl about the age of this one, and as I would not wish any young fellow to stand idly by and see her insulted by a cowardly scoundrel like yourself, so will I not stand here and see you insult her."

This was bold talk, certainly.

Darker grew the face of the captain.

A hoarse growl of rage escaped him.

"You young dog! I'll have your life for that!" he

cried. "I am not in the habit of letting any one call me such names, and I am not going to make a beginning now."

"You can't very well help yourself," said Dick, quietly.

"I have the advantage, and I intend to keep it. I have you covered, and if you or any of your men try to draw a weapon, I shall shoot, and shoot to kill!"

"You said that before."

"And I meant it, too. Don't you forget that!"

The redcoat was in a quandary.

He hated to give up, beaten by a youth not yet out of his teens, yet there was something about the young fellow that warned him that he was more dangerous than the majority of men.

The redcoat captain felt sure that death lurked in those weapons held with such a steady hand.

He hardly knew what to do, and was puzzling his brain to conjure up some scheme for getting the better of the bold youth.

"I'll have his life!" the captain said to himself. "I shall never rest satisfied until I have settled the young hound for good and all!"

The captain was eager to do this as quickly as possible, too.

Suddenly a thought struck him.

A plan came into his mind, which he thought might be successful.

He decided to put the plan into operation at once.

"Well, as you seem to hold the winning hand at present, I suppose I will have to give up and acknowledge myself beaten," the redcoat said, with an attempt to appear frank and honest; "when I come to think about it, I didn't want to kiss the girl, anyway. Good-by; we'll see you again some time, maybe."

Then the captain lifted his hat, made a sweeping bow, and, with a mocking smile on his lips, turned his horse and galloped away in the direction from which he had come, his men following closely.

Dick suspected a trick.

He had sized the captain up pretty closely, and did not believe he was the kind of man who would give up so easily.

"Quick, get into the house!" cried Dick, addressing the woman and her daughter. "Unless I miss my guess, those redcoats will be back here in a few moments, bent on mischief."

"Do you think so?" Mr. Bundy asked.

"I am sure of it; I had them at such a disadvantage when they were here that they did not dare try to do anything, and were forced to withdraw; they will come rushing back here with their weapons all out and ready for

business, and the chances are that they will give us the biggest kind of a fight."

"Five to two is pretty big odds," the man said, "but we'll give them a good fight, for all that. Come, let's all go into the house."

"You folks go in," said Dick; "I must remain out here and look after my horse. I can't afford to lose him, redcoats or no redcoats. Get inside as quick as you can and lock the doors."

"But you!" cried Lucy, in trembling tones. "They will kill you!"

"They'll have to catch me, first," smiled Dick; "and I don't believe they can do that."

The redcoats had now almost crossed the clearing.

A moment later they disappeared within the timber at the farther side.

"They'll be back in a moment!" cried Dick. "Into the house, all; hurry!"

Mr. and Mrs. Bundy and Lucy hastened into the house and closed the door, Lucy managing to enter last and give Dick an expressive look from her beautiful eyes.

At this instant there came the thunder of hoofbeats.

"I thought so," murmured Dick; "they're coming, sure enough."

At that instant the five redcoats dashed out of the timber and into the clearing at full speed.

Dick ran to where his horse was standing, and with a single bound leaped into the saddle.

As he did so a wild yell went up from the redcoats.

"That's all right, yell, you scoundrels!" murmured Dick. "You can't frighten me with yells, however; it will take more than that."

Putting spurs to his horse, Dick dashed into the timber, which at this point was open enough so that it was possible to ride through it at good speed.

After him came the redcoats, still yelling.

He did not believe the redcoats could catch him.

He was mounted on a splendid horse, and he doubted if the redcoats' animals were the equal of the one he bestrode.

Onward Dick rode.

After him, still yelling, came the redcoats.

"Oh, you fellows are making altogether too much noise!" the youth murmured.

Dick, of course, picked out the most open portion of the timber, as that made it easier for him to ride at a lively pace, and presently he struck into what seemed to be a sort of trail through the timber.

Dick followed this unhesitatingly.

He did not know exactly what had made the trail, or where it would lead to, but thought he might as well follow it up and risk running into new danger.

Suddenly the youth rode out into a clearing of perhaps ten or fifteen acres in extent.

At one side was a log house.

There were some men standing in front of the house, and at a glance Dick recognized them.

"It is those ruffians who were back at Mr. Bundy's!" he said to himself. "Jove! I am getting into more danger than ever."

Dick had no desire to get very close to the ruffians, and he swerved aside and rode at right angles toward the end of the clearing.

The ruffians set up a wild yell, and a couple of them ran into the cabin and came forth with rifles in their hands.

"They have recognized me," the youth thought; "and now they are going to try some rifle practice on me!"

This was not very pleasant.

Dick was well aware that such fellows were usually expert shots with the rifle.

"They may not be able to hit a moving target, however," he thought, hopefully.

The youth urged his horse forward even more rapidly.

The ruffians leveled their rifles, and Dick bent forward upon the neck of the horse so as to make it difficult for the scoundrels to get a good aim.

Crack!

One of the ruffians had fired.

The bullet sung past, a foot above Dick's head.

Crack!

This shot was a better one.

The bullet cut through the youth's coat, grazing the shoulder.

A yell of rage and disappointment went up from the men who had fired the shots.

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOURAGING THE REDCOATS.

It was evident that the redcoats had made up their minds to capture or kill Dick, before trying to bother the settler and his family.

The captain was so angry at the youth for the manner in which he had forced them to do as he commanded, that he was hungering for a chance to get even.

This did not worry Dick much.

They had hoped to drop the youth off the back of the horse.

"On, old fellow!" murmured Dick, patting the neck of the horse. "We will escape them yet."

Dick reached the timber at the end of the clearing and rode into it.

It was not so open as what he had been riding through for the past few minutes, but he was able to make very fair headway.

One thing it enabled him to do and that was to get out of sight of his pursuers.

This might make it possible for him to play some kind of a trick on the redcoats, he thought.

"They think I will keep right on going straight ahead," said Dick to himself; now, I think I shall have to fool them a bit in that respect."

He began bearing to the right.

He did not turn squarely to the right, but kept bearing away in that direction sufficiently so that he was going in a semi-circle.

"Now, if they keep straight on, I shall be all right," the youth thought.

He kept circling till he was going back in the direction of Mr. Bundy's cabin.

Dick was a splendid woodsman.

He had lived all his life in the timber, and seemed to know which way to go by instinct.

He kept on going, and half an hour later reached the clearing in which stood the cabin of Mr. Bundy.

The youth did not enter the clearing on horseback.

Instead, he dismounted, and leading his horse into a clump of bushes, tied him to a tree.

"I don't think the scoundrels will find him here," the youth thought; "and now to go to the cabin and reinforce Mr. Bundy. The redcoats, as soon as they learn that they have lost me, will return here, I am confident. Well, I think we will be able to whip them, even though they are five to two."

The youth left the timber and hastened across the clearing to where the cabin stood.

The inmates had seen him coming, for the door opened when he was within a few yards of the house and the smiling face of Mr. Bundy was seen.

And back of him were his wife and daughter.

"Hello, you have gotten away from the redcoats!" the man greeted.

"Yes," replied Dick; "I managed to give them the slip, and thinking that they would likely return and try to worry you, I made up my mind to come back and help you teach them a lesson."

"Thanks! I can't say I'm sorry you have done so, for five against one is pretty heavy odds."

"So it is; but five against two is not so great, and then we have the advantage of being fortified, while they will be in an open field, which ought to about equalize matters."

"So it ought; but where is your horse?"

"Out there in the timber; I tied him in a clump of bushes."

"Aren't you afraid the redcoats will find him?"

"I hardly think they will."

"How far did they chase you?"

"Do you know where those ruffians have been staying?"

"Yes; in a cabin about a mile from here."

"Just so; well, the redcoats chased me to that clearing."

"Did you see anything of the fellows who were here?"

"Yes, and they saw me, too."

"Ah! Did they fire upon you?"

"Yes, two of them did so—with rifles."

"I suspected as much; we heard the shots."

"But we thought they were fired by the redcoats, father," said Lucy.

"That's so; so we did."

"Did either of the bullets hit you?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"No," replied Dick; "one just grazed the skin, but did no damage."

"They would have been delighted had they brought you down," said Mr. Bundy.

"No doubt of it," the youth replied.

There was a short silence, and then Mr. Bundy asked:

"How soon do you think will the redcoats reach here?"

"I don't know; it depends on how far they go before they discover that I have doubled on them and taken the back track."

"They may not discover that for some time; they know nothing of woodcraft, you know."

"But very little, I judge—hist! I believe they are coming now!"

All listened eagerly.

Sure enough, the sound of the hoofbeats of horses was heard.

"It is them, sure enough!" said Mr. Bundy. "They have entered the clearing."

"So they have," from Dick; "and now do not hesitate to talk straight to them, Mr. Bundy. We can whip them, I am confident, and we will do best if we put on a bold front."

"I judge you are right; well, I will talk straight to them."

The trampling of horses' feet sounded closer and closer.

The riders of the horses were close at hand.

A few moments later the horsemen rode around in front of the cabin.

Dick and Mr. Bundy, peering out through cracks, saw them.

There were five in the party, and only a glance was needed to show that they were the redcoats.

The captain leaped to the ground, and approaching the door of the cabin, knocked.

Mr. Bundy made no reply to the knock.

The thought struck him that if he remained silent the man might be deceived into thinking that no one was at home.

Again the captain rapped.

Still Mr. Bundy maintained silence.

The captain became angry.

"You needn't pretend you are not in there," he cried, "for I know you are. You might as well answer me, first as last."

Still he received no reply, and turning to his men, he cried:

"Dismount; take up that log, yonder, and come here and burst the door down!"

Mr. Bundy realized that this would not do at all.

He must not permit this to be done.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Don't you dare try to do that, you scoundrels! If you do, it won't be good for you!"

"Oho! so you're in there, after all, are you!" cried the captain, sneeringly and triumphantly. "I thought I would rouse you up!"

"Yes, I'm in here, and I am armed, too! And if you attempt to break the door down I shall open fire on you!"

"Bah! What can you do?"

"I can kill some of you!"

"I doubt it; but even if you succeed in doing so we would kill you in return, and then where would you be?"

"I don't think you can kill me; I am here, where you cannot get me."

"Oh, we'll get at you! We will break the door down, and if you fire upon us it will be the worse for you and yours!"

There was a fierce intonation to the captain's voice, and Mrs. Bundy and Lucy shuddered.

The men had dismounted by this time, and they walked to where a log lay, and were about to lift it when Mr. Bundy said:

"If your men stoop to lift that log, we will open fire upon them!"

The captain made a gesture, and his men did not stoop to get hold of the log.

"Who are 'we?' " he asked.

"That does not matter," was the prompt reply; "you will find that I am not the only man in here, and if you persist in your course, you will get yourselves into trouble, I assure you."

There was a brief silence.

Doubtless the captain was turning the matter over in his mind.

"Bah!" he exclaimed, presently. "I don't believe there is another man in there save yourself."

"As I have already told you, you will find your mistake unless you go on away about your business."

"I have no business; ha, ha, ha!"

"It would be well for you if you did have."

"Bah! you can't expect to frighten me, my good friend!"

"I am not trying to frighten; I am simply trying to warn you and save the lives of your men."

"If you kill one of my men it will be the worst thing you ever did in your life; for I give you my word that if you do, I shall knock this cabin to pieces but what I get at you, and I will hang you to one of these trees out here!"

"And I give you my word that as sure as you have your men lift that log, we will open fire; the blood of your men will be on your own head."

An impatient exclamation escaped the lips of the redcoat, and he cried out:

"Bring that log and burst this door down! If that fool fires upon you, we will slice off his ears, cut off his fingers an inch at a time, and then hang him!"

The redcoats stooped to lift the log.

They took hold of it, and had lifted it a couple of feet from the ground when the sharp crack! crack! of two pistol shots was heard.

Two of the redcoats gave utterance to cries of pain, and letting go their hold of the log staggered back and almost fell.

The log dropped to the ground, the two unwounded redcoats looking toward the house in a frightened manner.

A curse escaped the lips of the captain.

"Are you badly hurt, boys?" he asked. "If you are, I pity the men who shot you, that's all! We'll have them out of there, if we have to roast them out!"

"I'm pretty hard hit, cap!" replied one.

"I am, too," from the other.

"I warned you," said Mr. Bundy; "you have only yourselves to blame for this. You had better mount and go on your way, for if you remain here and try any more

tricks, you will get some more bullets, and we shall shoot to kill, next time!"

"All right, we'll go now!" the captain said, in a fierce voice, hoarse with passion. "But we will come back again, and when we do—look out! We will square our account with you!"

"You will find me ready for you," was the undaunted reply. "If you know when you are well off, you will stay away from here."

"Bah! You are wasting your breath in talking thus to me, a captain in the British army. I'll be back here and I'll bring enough men so that you will see the folly of offering resistance."

Then the captain and the two unwounded men assisted the two wounded redcoats to mount, after which they, too, mounted and all rode slowly away.

When they had disappeared from the sight of those within the cabin, Mr. Bundy turned toward Dick and said:

"What do you think about it? Will they come back again? Will he keep his word?"

Dick shook his head in a dubious way.

"I could not say, for sure," he replied; "but I'm afraid he will do so."

"I am sure he meant it, Samuel," said Mrs. Bundy, tremblingly.

"I think so, father," from Lucy.

"What do you think we had better do?" asked Mr. Bundy.

"Is there any place you can go?" the youth asked.

"I have a brother living about five miles from here," said Mrs. Bundy; "we might go there for a while."

"You had better do so," agreed Dick; "the scoundrel of a captain will return here, I am sure, and finding you gone, and not knowing where to look for you, he may drop the matter."

"Do you think he will damage things, here?" asked Mr. Bundy.

"I have no doubt but that he will burn the house down, sir."

"Then we must take everything of value that we can carry, and not leave any more here for him to destroy than we can help."

"You will have plenty of time," said Dick; "the captain will have to return to Philadelphia for reinforcements, and to get the wounded men where they may be taken care of, and he won't be back before to-morrow morning, I am confident."

"In that case we will be able to get 'most everything out and away before he gets here."

"Do you think they have really gone?" asked Lucy.

"I think so," replied Dick; "but I will go out and reconnoitre, and make sure of it."

Dick opened the door and stepped out; and as he did so there came the sharp, whip-like crack of a pistol, and a bullet buried itself in the door beside the youth's head!

CHAPTER V.

DICK RECONNOITRES.

He leaped back into the house and closed the door.

Mrs. Bundy and Lucy had both given utterance to screams as the sound of the pistol shot came to their hearing.

"Are you hurt?" cried Lucy.

"No," replied Dick; "the bullet did not hit me."

"Those scoundrels are in hiding in the edge of the timber!" said Mr. Bundy.

"At least one of them is there," agreed Dick.

"You think that only one remained behind?"

"That is what I think—one of those who was not wounded."

"While the others have gone on, eh?"

"Yes, that is what I think, and I am going to make that fellow wish he had gone, before he is an hour older."

There was a grim, determined look on the youth's face.

"What are you going to do?" asked Lucy.

There was an anxious look in her pretty eyes and on her face.

"I am going to interview him at close range," the youth replied, quietly.

"But he will shoot you dead before you can get close to him!"

"So he will!" coincided Mrs. Bundy.

"I wouldn't try anything so dangerous, Dick," said Mr. Bundy.

"There won't be much danger attached to the feat," said Dick.

"You think not?"

"I am sure of it; you see, he is a British soldier."

"Yes, but——"

"While I am an American, and one who has lived all his life in the timber. I am as good at woodcraft, Mr. Bundy, almost, as an Indian. I can easily slip up on him, and he will not know I am anywhere near until I rise up and confront him; and when I do that I shall be ready for him, you may be sure, and will have the advantage all on my side."

"That will be all right, if you can accomplish the feat successfully, Dick; but how about getting out of the house? There is only one door, and it is commanded by the redcoat."

"But there's a window in the rear."

"Ah, yes, so there is; I had forgotten that."

"I shall climb out through the window, enter the timber and then make a half circuit and approach the fellow from the side. He won't be looking for me, and I shall be able to take him by surprise."

"I hope so, I am sure."

"You must be very careful," said Lucy.

"Oh, yes, I will be careful; I'm not going to give that redcoat a chance to put a bullet through me if I can help it."

Dick moved across to the window.

The window was hinged at one side and opened inward. Dick opened it.

Dick quickly climbed through the window.

Then with a wave to the inmates of the cabin, he disappeared.

"Oh, I hope he will not get killed," breathed Lucy.

"I don't think there's much danger of that," said Mr. Bundy.

"If one-half of what we have heard regarding Dick Slater is true, he is an exceedingly shrewd youth and capable of taking care of himself under almost any and all circumstances."

The house stood but a short distance from the edge of the timber, and it took the youth but a few seconds to reach cover.

He had gone only a few steps after reaching the edge of the timber when he suddenly stopped and gave utterance to a muttered exclamation.

"Great guns! there come those Tory ruffians again; I guess they think that I'm out of the way and that they will be able to catch Mr. Bundy alone and at a disadvantage. Well, we'll see about that; I'll give them a scare that'll be apt to do them for a while."

As Dick spoke, he drew a couple of pistols.

He was concealed behind a tree and waited till the ruffians were within fifty feet of him.

Then he suddenly leaped out from behind a tree, gave utterance to a yell and charged the fellows.

So sudden and unexpected was Dick's appearance, so blood-curdling the yell to which he gave utterance, so dangerous-looking the pistols which the youth brandished in the air, that the ruffians were seized with a feeling of terror.

They gave utterance to yells of fear, and, whirling, ran for their lives.

They were three to one, true, but this fact did not seem to impress them as being of much importance.

They recognized Dick as being the youth who had handled them so roughly before, and having had a taste of his quality, they had no desire for a second dose.

Dick made up his mind to give the fellows a good scare while he was at it.

He gave chase, and yelled at them to stop or he would fire.

This only had the effect of making them run faster.

They did not wish to be forced to face the terrible youth again.

Crack! Crack!

Dick had fired two shots.

Wild yells went up from two of the ruffians.

The bullets had taken effect.

Not seriously, however.

Dick had no desire to take the lives of the scoundrels, and had not tried to kill or even seriously wound them.

That they were not seriously wounded was proven by the fact that they still kept on running—faster, if possible, than before the shots had been fired.

This was what Dick desired.

He wished to frighten them so that they would not risk venturing near the home of Mr. Bundy again.

So he kept after the three ruffians, and every few moments gave utterance to a yell which was calculated to make the cowards, for such they were, run faster than ever.

Presently he paused, however, and stood still, watching the fellows run.

"Great guns! what runners they are!" he murmured, with a laugh. "If they were to run against trees they would split them wide open."

The three fleeing ruffians disappeared very quickly, and Dick turned on his heel and made his way back in the direction from which he had come.

He did not go clear back to the cabin, however.

When within perhaps a hundred yards of it he veered off to the right, and moved through the timber in that direction.

He moved in a wide semi-circle, and after half an hour of cautious work was nearly opposite the cabin and on the opposite side of the clearing.

"Now, if the redcoat didn't take fright when he heard me yelling and shooting at the Tories he will be somewhere in this vicinity," thought Dick; "I shall have to exercise great caution, as I do not wish to be caught at a disadvantage."

Dick became very cautious.

He moved forward very slowly.

He brought all his woodcraft into play.

This was considerable, for Dick was almost the equal of an Indian brave in this kind of work.

Dick kept a sharp lookout, as may be supposed.

Presently he caught sight of what he was looking for.

One of the redcoats had remained behind to keep watch of the cabin, as Dick had suspected.

It was not the captain, but one of the men.

He was seated on his horse and was gazing toward the cabin, which he could probably see from his elevated position.

He gave frequent glances all around him and it was evident to Dick's mind that the fellow was nervous.

"He hears the shooting and yelling and doesn't know what to think of it," thought Dick; "I do not think it would take much to put him to flight."

Dick, securely hidden behind a tree, pondered the situation.

"Which would be the better plan," he asked himself; "to try to capture the redcoat or to fight him away?"

Of course, Dick could have shot the redcoat dead, but he did not wish to do that.

Even though it was war time and he would really have been justified in doing so, he could not bring himself to do it.

To his mind it savored too much of assassination.

Dick made up his mind, presently, to frighten the redcoat away.

Having so decided, Dick got ready to act.

He drew his pistols and cocked them.

Then he suddenly leaped out from behind a tree, not twenty feet from the startled redcoat, and leveling the pistols, cried out:

"Surrender, or you are a dead man!"

It is doubtful whether the redcoat would have dared try to escape, but it was not left for him to decide.

Dick's sudden appearance frightened the horse, which was a mettlesome animal, and, with a snort of fear, it whirled and darted away at full speed.

The sudden action of the beast came very near unseating the redcoat, but by grasping the horse's mane he managed to remain on the animal's back.

Dick was determined to make a good job of it, and he gave utterance to two or three wild yells which were well calculated to aid in accelerating the animal's flight.

Then crack! crack! Dick fired two shots from his pistols.

"There's nothing like making a good job of it," thought

Dick, with a smile; "it's my guess that both horse and rider are so badly frightened that they won't care to venture back here very soon."

Horse and rider were soon out of sight and Dick made his way quickly back to the cabin.

The inmates saw him coming and opened the door while he was yet fifty feet away.

"What was all that shooting and yelling?" asked Mr. Bundy, stepping out of doors. "Surely you didn't do all of it?"

"Pretty near all of it," smiled Dick. And then he told how he had encountered the three Tory ruffians and put them to flight and later on the redcoat.

The three—for Mrs. Bundy and Lucy had now emerged from the cabin—uttered exclamations of amazement.

"You don't mean to say those ruffian were coming back!" cried Mr. Bundy.

"Yes, that is just what they were doing."

"But you stopped them?"

Dick laughed aloud as he thought of the reckless manner in which the frightened ruffians had fled through the timber.

"Yes, I stopped them and then started them again—on the back track; I don't believe I ever saw a worse scared set of fellows in all my life."

"Do you think they'll come back again?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, I don't think they will," he replied.

"I hope not," said Mrs. Bundy.

"So do I," said Lucy. "Ugh! the ugly brutes!"

"I am pretty sure that they were so badly frightened that they won't venture near here again soon."

"And what about the redcoat?" asked Mr. Bundy. "I suppose there was one over there, as you thought there would be?"

"Yes, there was one there," said Dick; "but I don't think there is any danger of him coming back, either."

And then he told how he had frightened the redcoat.

"And now," said Dick, "what are you folks going to do?"

"If you would be so kind as to stay here with my wife and daughter till I come back, I will go over to the home of my brother-in-law and get a couple of horses to use in transporting our possessions from here to his home," said Mr. Bundy; "it is asking a good deal, I know, but it will be a great kindness, as I am afraid to leave them alone; and if we all go, some of those scoundrels are likely to come and take everything, or destroy the house and all that is in it."

"I shall be pleased to remain here, Mr. Bundy," said Dick; "go along, and I will stay till you get back."

"Thank you!" and then, after a few words with his wife, Mr. Bundy took his departure.

It was almost dark when he got back; his brother-in-law was with him, and they brought two horses.

It did not take long to load all the portable possessions of Mr. Bundy onto the horses, and then, after they had thanked Dick for what he had done for them, the party set out for the home of the brother-in-law, while Dick, mounting his horse, rode away in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTURED.

Dick rode along at a moderate pace, as the road was crooked, and it was so dark he could not see very well.

"Well, this has been quite a lively afternoon!" he thought. "I am glad I happened along just when I did, for if those ruffians had not been interfered with, there is no telling what they might have done."

Then, too, Dick did not care if he was late in reaching Philadelphia; he would not have wished to enter the city in the daytime, anyway, as he would have been stopped and might even have been held as a spy, while at night, and in the darkness he would, he was sure, be able to slip through and get into the city without being seen.

Dick soon reached the main road, and turning to the left, pursued his way in that direction.

It was only about a mile to the Schuylkill River, and Dick soon reached the stream.

There was no bridge across the river at this point, and it was necessary to ford the stream.

Dick had been across the river at this point before, however, and knew just how deep the water was.

He rode into the water, unhesitatingly, and was soon nearing the other side.

The moon was just rising in the east, but was not up high enough to give much light.

The youth reached the farther side and rode up out of the water.

As he did so he was treated to a startling surprise.

Out from among the shadows of the timber leaped at least a score of dark forms!

Dick and his horse were surrounded in a jiffy.

"Aha! we have you now, you young scoundrel!" cried a triumphant voice.

It was the voice of the captain, with whose plans Dick had interfered back at the cabin of Mr. Bundy.

Strong hands seized the bridle reins, and Dick was threatened on all sides by weapons held in the hands of men who would not, he was sure, hesitate to use them at the command from their leader.

And that the leader would give the command without scruple, in case Dick tried to escape, the youth was sure.

It was useless to try to offer resistance; Dick realized this.

He decided to make the best of the situation.

"What does this mean, gentlemen?" he asked, in the most calm, unconcerned tone imaginable. "Why have you lain in wait and leaped out upon me in this fashion?"

"You know well enough, you young scoundrel!" cried the man who had spoken before.

Dick recognized the voice the instant the man spoke, for he had a splendid ear for voices, but he wouldn't acknowledge it, of course.

"You are mistaken, sir," he said, quietly; "I don't know what you mean, and I know not why you should lie in wait in this fashion and leap out upon me."

"Well, you soon will know!" in a ferocious tone. "Take him off his horse, men, and bind his arms. Don't attempt resistance, if you value your life!"

"Oh, I have too much sense to try to offer resistance when I am outnumbered, twenty to one," replied Dick.

As he spoke he leaped to the ground, not waiting to be pulled off his horse.

"Jove! I'm in for it!" thought Dick, as the men were busy binding his arms. "They will probably take me to Philadelphia, and as there are some there who know me as Dick Slater, the patriot spy, I shall probably be shot or hung, unless I am fortunate enough to escape, which isn't likely."

The redcoats, for such the men were, quickly tied Dick's arms together behind his back.

"Now put the young scoundrel back on his horse!" ordered the captain.

This was done.

"Now bring the horses!" was the next order.

All the men save the captain himself hastened away, disappearing in the timber at the side of the road.

The captain, pistol in hand, stood guard over Dick, and the instant the men had disappeared he asked:

"Do you know what I am going to do with you, you young scoundrel?"

"I haven't the least idea—you old scoundrel!"

Dick's prompt and saucy reply angered the redcoat terribly.

A curse escaped his lips.

"Oh, you think you are smart, don't you?" he growled; "but I'll show you! I'll take that out of you, and before morning, too!"

"Oh, is that so?"

"Yes, that is so! And now I am going to tell you what I am going to do with you."

"Don't do it if it will make you feel bad," said Dick, in a matter-of-fact tone of voice.

"I am going to have you taken back to the cabin of that man in the woods where I first met you, you young scoundrel, and I am going to call those people out of the house, and force them to witness a hanging! You know whose hanging it is going to be?"

There was a fierceness in the man's voice that was enough to make a person's blood run cold, but Dick was as imperturbable as ever, as he replied promptly:

"Mine, I suppose?"

"Yes, yours! I am going to hang you before the eyes of that pretty girl, who, to judge by the way she looked at you, must be in love with you!"

Dick shook his head.

"Oh, you are wrong there, I assure you," he said; "the girl is not in love with me, at all; why, I had never met her before, and in fact had not known, fifteen minutes before you put in an appearance, that there was such a person in the world."

The captain gave a grunt of unbelief.

"That will do for you to tell; but I am not fool enough to believe it!" he exclaimed.

"It is the truth, just the same."

"How came you there, then?"

Dick related the story, of how he came to be at the home of the Bundys when the redcoats put in an appearance there.

The captain listened, and then grunted again, evidently wishing Dick to understand that he did not believe the truth of the story.

"You tell that very well," he said; "but I don't believe it. Anyway, you interfered and wounded a couple of my men, and I am going to settle the affair with you, and put you out of the way, for I have made up my mind to have that girl for my own!"

"You scoundrel!"

That was all Dick said, but he said it in such a tone that it was more than if he had uttered a sentence filled with vituperative epithets.

"Be careful!" grated the redcoat, threateningly; "I

might take it into my head to pull this trigger, and then where would you be?"

"Assuming that there is no chance for me to escape the death by hanging, which you say you have decided upon for me, a death by bullet would be preferable, don't you think? So I wouldn't care much if you did pull the trigger."

Dick said this, but he did not mean it.

He was a youth who believed that while there is life, there is hope.

He thought it quite possible that he might escape, if the captain delayed putting him to death till the Bundy cabin was reached.

At any rate, it was his rule to put death as far in the future as possible, even though it should be but an hour or so.

Much might happen in an hour.

"You are right," agreed the redcoat; "I shall not shoot you. I have a better revenge in view. I will wait, and hang you in the presence of that little beauty of the woods!"

The men returned, leading their horses, at this moment, and at the word from their commander, they mounted.

The captain mounted his horse, and led the way, the soldiers closing around the youth, and making it impossible for him to make a dash for liberty—which he was not likely to do, anyway, as his hands were bound, and he would have been knocked against a tree and killed, doubtless.

The party crossed the river, and made its way along the road.

When the road leading to the cabin in the clearing was reached, the redcoats turned into it.

They rode slower now, and only two abreast, but there was no chance for Dick to get away, even had he been free in so far as his hands were concerned, for there were redcoats in front of him, redcoats behind him, and one at his side, this latter having hold of the bridle rein of Dick's horse.

The moon was high enough so that it gave good light, now, and as the party rode out into the clearing, it would have been plainly visible to anyone in the vicinity.

"Surround the cabin!" ordered the captain; "I will keep guard over the prisoner."

The soldiers rode forward, and surrounded the cabin.

Dick was laughing in his sleeve.

He knew the cabin was empty, and wondered what the redcoats would say when they discovered the fact.

"The captain will be wild with rage," he thought; and this thought was sufficient to cause a sober look to appear on the youth's face.

There was good reason for this:

"When he finds that his intended victims have escaped

him, he will be exceedingly angry," said Dick to himself; "and the result will be that he will undoubtedly wreak revenge on me."

This was far from being a pleasant prospect.

"I am afraid I am in for it," Dick went on; "but I must not give up! I will try to do something to ward off the fate which seems to be close at hand."

Dick had been quietly pulling at the rope which bound his wrists all the time they had been riding along, and had succeeded in loosening it slightly; not enough, however, to make it possible for him to get his hands loose.

Still, impelled thereto by the instinct of self-preservation, Dick worked at the rope.

The captain now ordered one of the men to dismount and knock on the door of the cabin.

"I am going to keep my word," he said to Dick; "I said I would hang you in the presence of the girl, and I am going to do it!"

"Indeed!" remarked Dick; "I would be willing to wager something that you will do nothing of the kind."

"Bah! bravado, mere bravado!"

"Do you think so?"

The man had approached the door by this time, and the captain, watching the man eagerly, made no reply.

The soldier knocked at the door.

Then he waited a few moments.

There came no sound from the cabin, of course, as Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter were at the home of their brother-in-law by this time.

"Knock again," ordered the captain.

The man obeyed.

He knocked loudly.

"There, I guess they'll hear that!" he muttered.

But there was no response from within.

The captain gave utterance to a muttered curse under his breath.

He hastened to the man's side.

"Have you heard no sound from within?" the captain asked.

"None at all, cap'n!" was the reply; "kind of looks as though there wasn't anybody in there."

"Oh, yes there is; they are playing possum, that is all. They have heard you, but think to fool us by keeping quiet. I'll rouse them."

The captain drew a pistol, and pounded on the door with the butt.

This made a great noise.

"Hello! Hello!" he cried; "wake up! Wake up and open the door!"

He waited a few moments, listening intently.

Not the least sound came from within, and the captain became angry.

"Curse them!" he growled; "I'll make them wish they hadn't kept us waiting, when I get my hands on them!"

"I don't believe there is anybody in there," said the soldier.

"Oh, yes there is," was the impatient reply of the officer; "but I suppose we shall be forced to break the door open."

Then he gave the command for more of the men to dismount, after which he instructed them to take the log, which still lay where it had fallen when the other soldiers had attempted to use it, and break the door down.

Half a dozen of the redcoats seized the log, and advancing quickly, struck the door a terrific blow.

The door quaked and quivered, but held.

"Try it again," cried the captain; "we'll get it the next time."

But they didn't; it stood the next blow almost as well as it had the first.

Again the men advanced with the log, and struck the door a strong blow.

There was a cracking sound this time, and a cry of triumph escaped the captain.

"It will go down next time," he declared; "hurry, and give it another blow."

The man obeyed.

Forward they came, on the trot.

Crash!

The end of the log came in contact with the door once more.

The door gave way, and went down with a crash.

"Look out! he will fire on you!" cried the captain.

The alacrity with which the redcoats dropped the log and leaped aside would have been amusing under other circumstances.

Dick could hardly keep from laughing, serious as was his own situation.

Knowing, as he did, that the cabin was empty, the action of the men seemed doubly ludicrous.

There came no shots from within the cabin, of course, and presently the redcoats became brave.

"I don't believe there is anybody in there, cap'n," said one of the men.

The captain was beginning to suspect something of the kind, himself.

"Look and see," he ordered.

Three or four of the men entered the cabin.

"There isn't a soul in there, cap'n!" was the report they brought.

"What! say you so?" howled the officer.

He was terribly disappointed.

He turned to Dick, angrily.

"Where are they?" he asked, peremptorily.

"How should I know?" the youth replied.

"You do know!"

Dick shook his head.

"I assure you that I do not," he replied.

"Bah! I know better! You know where those people have gone, and what is more, you shall tell, or we will hang you higher than Haaman!"

Dick realized that he was in a tight place.

Still, he knew full well that it would do him no good if he was to tell where Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter had gone; and he would not have told even had he known it would have saved his life.

"I have told you the truth," the youth asserted! "I don't know where they have gone."

"You are lying, and I know it!"

"No, I am telling the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"You are telling a lie, and nothing but a lie—but I will have the truth out of you, if I have to pull it out with a rope!"

Then the captain turned to his men.

"Get that rope," he ordered; "rig a noose in one end and throw the other over the limb of this big tree, here!"

The men obeyed with alacrity.

They considered that it would be less trouble than carrying him along with them; he was in the way, and the quicker he was gotten out the better they would like it.

The rope was brought forth from a saddle-bag, and a noose was rigged in one end of it.

Then the other end was thrown over a limb, and hauled down till the noose hung about five feet from the ground.

"Assist the prisoner to dismount," ordered the captain.

The men obeyed, and quickly lifted Dick down from his horse's back.

"Lead him over there, and place the noose around his neck!"

This was the next order of the captain of the redcoats, and they obeyed promptly.

A few moments later Dick stood under the limb of the tree, the noose around his neck.

CHAPTER VII.

IN DEADLY PERIL.

The redcoats laughed and joked as they did the work.

They seemed to be trying to frighten Dick, but they failed signally.

A braver youth than the young patriot never lived, and

he would not show these men that he was afraid his time had come.

"I will die bravely," the youth thought; "but how I wish I might have died on the field of battle! instead of in this miserable fashion!"

The captain now advanced and faced Dick.

"Young man, if you will tell me where the people who lived in this cabin have gone, I will spare your life for the present," he said; "what do you say?"

"I have already answered you," the youth replied, looking undauntedly into the other's eyes.

"You won't tell me where they have gone, then?"

"I cannot, for I do not know."

"Bosh! I know better! You need not hold back, thinking that I will not put my threat into effect and hang you if you refuse, for I will do so as sure as I am a living man! I will hang you, if you do not tell me where those people have gone!"

"Oh, I know that you mean just what you say," said Dick, quietly; "it is easy to see that, but I cannot tell you, so you might as well give your men the order to pull me up."

The redcoat captain stared at Dick in amazement.

He could not help being impressed by the bravery shown by the youth.

"Say, who and what are you, anyway?" he asked abruptly.

"Oh, I'm no one or anything in particular," was Dick's quiet reply.

"I know better! I more than half believe you are a rebel!"

"You are at liberty to believe anything you like; but that doesn't make it true, you know."

"Just the same, I am confident that you are something more than an ordinary country youth!"

"Perhaps it would be best for you to hold me a prisoner, instead of hanging me," Dick suggested.

"I'll take the risk; and now, are you going to give me the information which I seek, or not?"

"I have none to give you."

Dick's tone was decided.

The redcoat seemed to realize that the youth was in earnest, and that he would not give the information, and the realization made him furious.

"You have sealed your doom!" he cried; "I will hang you, as sure as I am a living man!"

Then he turned to the men who had hold of the rope.

"Pull!" he commanded; "pull slowly, and when I tell you, stop."

The men began pulling on the rope, and pulled till Dick,

to keep from being choked, was forced to rise up onto his tiptoes.

Then the captain told the men to stop pulling, and hold steady, just as they were.

"Now, then," said the captain, in a fierce, threatening tone of voice, "I am going to give you one last chance. Once more I ask you to tell me where those people have gone. If you will do so, I will spare your life, and perhaps allow you to go free, but if you still persist in your refusal, then I shall give the order for my men to pull you up, and there will be no countermanding of the order, I assure you!"

Dick realized that the captain meant every word he uttered.

"He will hang me, sure!" the youth thought, and then, as he had no desire to die, but wished very much to live, Dick began trying to devise some scheme whereby his death could be postponed to some time in the future.

He was determined that he would not tell where Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter had gone, but a sudden thought struck the youth, and he thought that he saw a way to keep the redcoats from hanging him.

There was a standing reward for Dick.

The reward had been offered by General Howe, the British commander-in-chief, and the sum offered for Dick's capture was five hundred pounds.

This was a lot of money, and Dick felt pretty confident that if the redcoats knew who he was, they would not be the men to kill the golden goose.

It was a chance, anyway, and the youth made up his mind to try it.

True, he might not escape death, as he would likely be hung, anyway, but that unpleasant event would be pushed back a few days and he might get a chance to escape in the meantime.

So Dick looked at the redcoat captain and said:

"The information which you ask me to give, I cannot give, for the reason that I do not know where those people have gone, but there is one piece of information which I can give you which you will be glad to receive, I am confident."

The captain had frowned when Dick first began to speak, but a look of interest and curiosity appeared as he heard what further the youth had to say.

"So you have some information which you think I shall be glad to receive, eh?" he remarked.

"That is what I said, and it is the truth, too."

"Very well, let me hear what it is; then I can decide for myself."

Dick was silent for a moment.

"I suppose you like gold, captain?" he asked abruptly.

The captain stared and looked surprised.

"Oh, yes, I like gold," he replied; "why? What of it?"

"I suppose you are aware," went on Dick, "that there is a reward of five hundred pounds offered for the capture of a patriot spy named Dick Slater?"

Again the captain stared and looked at Dick searchingly.

"The patriot spy named Dick Slater?" he repeated.

"Yes; sometimes known as 'The Champion Spy of the Revolution!'"

The captain nodded.

"Yes, I know there is a reward of five hundred pounds offered for the capture of that fellow," he said.

"And I suppose you would like to secure that reward?"

Again the captain looked searchingly at Dick.

"I most certainly would like to do so!" he declared; "who would not?"

"I can make it possible for you to secure the reward!"

Dick spoke earnestly and impressively.

The captain started, and an eager look appeared in his eyes.

"You can?"

There was an inflection denoting doubt.

"I can," replied Dick.

Still the captain looked doubtful.

"I don't believe you," he declared; "this is just a trick to keep me from hanging you, but it won't work!"

"It is to keep you from hanging me, true," Dick acknowledged, "but there is no trick about it."

"And you can put it in my way to secure this reward?"

"I can."

"To secure the reward, I would have to capture this Dick Slater?"

Dick nodded.

He could hardly keep from smiling.

"Yes, you will have to deliver Dick Slater, a prisoner, into the hands of General Howe, in order to secure the reward," he acknowledged.

"And you think I can do this?"

"I haven't the least doubt regarding the matter."

"And you can give me information which will assure this?"

"I can."

"Then you must know where Dick Slater is?"

Again Dick nodded.

"I do," he said, quietly.

An exclamation escaped the lips of the captain.

Exclamations came from the lips of the men, also.

That Dick had excited great interest in the minds of the redcoats was evident.

Five hundred pounds was a great deal of money.

It would buy lots of luxuries, and the redcoats liked such things.

"You know where Dick is?" the captain cried.

"I do."

Dick's tone was decided, and his hearers were of the opinion that he meant what he said, and knew what he was talking about.

"Is he far from here?" the captain queried.

Dick shook his head.

"Not very far."

"But can we effect his capture?"

The captain's tone was anxious.

"I am confident that you will experience no difficulty in that part of it."

"You think not?"

"I am positive of it."

The captain pondered a few moments, then he looked at Dick.

"I'll tell you what I will do, young fellow," he said, slowly and deliberately; "if you will tell me where I can find this Dick Slater, and it turns out that we are enabled to capture him, I will spare your life."

"All right," replied Dick; "I accept your proposition."

"Good! You are sensible, and fortunate, too, for but for this, I should have hanged you, sure!"

"Perhaps I am not so fortunate as you think."

The captain looked puzzled.

"I don't know what you mean," he said.

"You will presently."

"Very well; but where shall we go to find this Dick Slater?"

"Don't go anywhere."

"Eh?"

The captain was surprised.

Exclamations of surprise escaped the men, also.

"What do you mean?" the captain asked. "Why do you say for us not to go anywhere?"

"Because I mean it. You can stay right here, and make a prisoner of Dick Slater."

"Ah! he is coming here, then?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, he is not coming here," Dick replied.

An exclamation of vexation escaped the captain's lips.

"What do you mean, anyway?" he asked, testily; "if Dick Slater is not coming here, and we are not to go away from here in search of him, how will we capture him?"

Dick laughed aloud.

"It is very simple," he said; "Dick Slater is already here!"

"What!"

The exclamation came from the captain and his men simultaneously, and as they spoke, they looked around, as though expecting to find themselves attacked.

"You say Dick Slater is here?" the captain cried; "where is he?"

"Here!"

Dick nodded his head to indicate himself as he spoke.

"What!" the captain almost yelled, "you don't mean to say that—that——"

Dick nodded his head.

"Yes," he said calmly; "I do mean to say that very thing. I am Dick Slater!"

The captain and his men stared at the youth for a few moments in silence.

Then the captain shook his head.

"You can't make me believe any such fairy story as that!" he declared; "you are no more Dick Slater than I am!"

Dick was surprised.

He was taken somewhat aback, too.

He had not imagined for a moment that the redcoat captain would doubt his statement.

"You don't believe me?" he asked, in an amazed tone of voice.

"I do not! I am convinced that this is only a shrewd scheme on your part to escape being hung; but it won't work! You can't fool me, smart as you no doubt think you are, and I shall hang you just the same! Up with him, boys!"

The men began pulling on the rope.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE NICK OF TIME.

Bob Estabrook was one of "The Liberty Boys of '76."

He was Dick Slater's nearest and dearest boy chum.

Their parents had owned adjoining farms in Westchester County, New York, for many years.

The youths had practically grown up together.

They had hunted, fished, swam, worked and played together, and when Dick had told Bob of his intention of joining the patriot army, Bob had immediately declared that he also would join.

Then the thought had struck Dick that it would be a good plan to organize a company of youths of about his and Bob's ages, and this was done.

The company was organized, and as we stated in the beginning, the youths were known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

The "Liberty Boys" had done splendid work during the time they had been members of the patriot army and during the past winter; although there had been but little fighting to do, they had made themselves extremely useful by foraging and securing provisions for the half-starved soldiers of Valley Forge.

It was an extremely hard matter for the "Liberty Boys" to remain in camp and keep quiet.

Scarcely a day passed but that they did not go on a foraging expedition.

They had left Valley Forge where the patriot army was still encamped, at the same time that Dick had left.

They had gone in a different direction, however, and they rode along, keeping a sharp lookout for something in which to take a hand.

Their search for adventure was not very successful, however, and they rode throughout the afternoon without having found any redcoats or secured anything in the way of provisions.

They had gradually made a half-circuit, and at about sundown they were within a few miles of the Schuylkill River, though at a point several miles below the ford.

"Let's go up to the ford and cross the river," suggested Mark Morrison.

"All right," agreed Bob, promptly; "I must say that I am not inclined to return to camp empty-handed."

"Nor I. I'm in for staying out all night, if necessary."

"And I, too; well, we'll cross the river and try our luck on the other side."

The "Liberty Boys" were all in favor of this.

They were disappointed and disgusted at their lack of success in finding any redcoats, and were not willing to return to Valley Forge till after they had something to show for their work.

They rode up the river in the direction of the ford.

They did not go fast, as they were in no particular hurry, and it came dark before they were within a mile of the road leading to the ford.

Presently they reached the main road, and turning into it, rode toward the ford.

They rode onward until they reached the river, but just before they emerged from the timber which bordered the stream, Bob, who was in the lead, reined up his horse, and in a low, cautious tone commanded the others to do the same.

They obeyed.

Bob leaned forward and peered across toward the opposite shore.

"What is it?" asked Mark Morrison in a cautious voice.

"There is somebody over on the other side of the river, Mark; look, and see if you can't see them."

Mark peered across to the opposite shore.

"You are right, Bob!" he exclaimed eagerly. "There is a band of horsemen over there; see, they are riding into the river now."

"You are right, Mark, and I believe they are redcoats, too."

"I shouldn't wonder; what shall we do—wait here and give them a volley as soon as they near the shore?"

"No, I'll tell you what we'll do, Mark; we'll conceal ourselves at the sides of the road, among the trees, and size them up as they come along; they might be friends, you know, and we want to make sure before attacking them; the "Liberty Boys" quickly but silently rode into the edge of the timber which bordered the road on both sides.

Here they would be fully concealed from the sight of anyone riding along the road.

The party of redcoats—which, as the reader has already suspected, was the party which had made Dick a prisoner—was soon across the river, and as it moved past the spot where the "Liberty Boys" were hiding, the youths made a discovery which filled them with surprise and dismay.

They heard and recognized Dick's voice, he being engaged in conversation with the redcoat captain.

Their brave young commander was in the hands of the enemy!

Bob hardly knew what to do.

He felt like giving the command for the "Liberty Boys" to surround the redcoats and rescue Dick, but he restrained himself.

He was afraid that the redcoats might shoot Dick, rather than allow him to be rescued.

No, he must think of some other plan.

One thing puzzled Bob:

Why were the redcoats going away from Philadelphia instead of toward that place?

This question was a poser.

Bob could not answer it satisfactorily.

He would have supposed that the redcoats would make for Philadelphia as soon as they had captured the youth.

It did not matter what their reasons were for going away from Philadelphia instead of toward the city, however.

The fact remained that their action favored Bob and the "Liberty Boys."

"They were going in the direction of Valley Forge," thought Bob; "and that is all right; we will follow them

and they may stop somewhere and go into camp, which will give us a chance to rescue Dick without placing his life in jeopardy."

Bob waited till the redcoats were at a safe distance, and then he communicated his plans to his comrades.

The youths thought Bob's plan a good one.

They rode out from among the trees and followed the party of redcoats.

They were very cautious, for they did not wish the redcoats to know that they were being followed.

When, a mile farther on, the redcoats turned aside into the timber, Bob and his comrades were considerably surprised.

They made up their minds, however, that the redcoats were going to go into camp for the night, and were seeking a good camping ground.

The youths hoped that this was the case.

It would give them the chance they were looking for, and they would be able to rescue their commander.

The moon had now risen high enough so that it gave considerable light, but the road they were following was so crooked that they were enabled to keep within a hundred yards of the party of redcoats without being in any danger of being seen.

Presently Bob, who was in advance, reined up his horse, the other youths doing likewise.

They had reached the edge of the clearing.

The redcoats were already at the opposite side of the clearing and had come to a stop in front of the log cabin.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Bob in a cautious undertone, "this is quite a surprise; this is the first I knew that there was a clearing and a house here."

"It is a new thing to me, too," said Mark Morrison.

"I wonder why the redcoats have come here."

"That is a puzzle," was the reply.

"Well, we'll watch them and find out for ourselves," said Bob.

"You are right," agreed Mark; "but say, won't it be a good idea for us to dismount and tie our horses back in the timber a ways?"

"Yes, I think that will be a good plan, Mark; without a doubt, this is the only road leading out of the clearing and the redcoats will have to come this way when they start to leave; then we will be in a position to stop them as we can leap out and grasp the bridle-reins and force their horses to stop."

Bob gave the order and the "Liberty Boys" dismounted.

Then they led their horses back into the timber a ways and tied them.

This done, they made their way back to the edge of the

clearing where they could view what was going on over at the cabin.

One of the redcoats rapped on the door of the cabin.

"They are trying to arouse the inmates of the cabin," said Bob. "I have an idea that I understand the matter: The man who lives in the cabin is probably a Tory and they wish to leave Dick in his hands while they go on an expedition of some kind."

"I judge you are right," agreed Mark Morrison.

The next action of the redcoats caused the youths to change their minds regarding this, however.

A half dozen of the redcoats took up a heavy log and moving forward, struck the door of the cabin a heavy blow with the impromptu battering ram.

"Say, that doesn't look as though the inmates of the cabin were friends of the redcoats, Bob!" exclaimed Mark.

"You are right, Mark. I don't understand this affair at all."

"That's a stout door, Bob."

"Yes, but it won't stand many such jolts as that."

"No, it will soon go down."

It turned out as Mark predicted.

The door soon gave way and went down with a crash.

"Now watch closely," said Bob. "We must not allow those redcoats to murder or maltreat the inmates of that cabin."

"You're right, Bob; it may be a good thing that we followed the scoundrels to this place."

The youths waited and watched a few moments and came to the conclusion there was no one in the cabin after all.

When some of the redcoats had entered the cabin and came back out again, the youths were sure that they were right.

The cabin was empty.

The moon gave so much light now that the youths could see with almost as much distinctness as though it were daytime, and they had no difficulty in making out the form of Dick.

They saw the redcoats gather around their comrade, and Bob became uneasy.

"I'm afraid they mean him harm," he said, and we must get close enough so as to be able to interfere in case they do try to injure him."

"I think we had better do so," agreed Mark.

Bob then gave orders for about half the party to remain where they were, while the other half—about fifty in all—were to slip around and get close to where the redcoats were.

This maneuver was executed, and the youths got near enough so that they could hear the conversation going on between the redcoat captain and Dick.

They were on the point of rushing out and attacking the redcoats several times, but Bob kept waiting in hopes that they would be able to catch the redcoats napping, and have them helpless before they could draw their weapons.

He waited even after the redcoats had the rope around Dick's neck, thinking that a favorable opportunity would come, when the attention of all might be directed in some other direction for a moment, but no such opportunity did come, and presently he was forced to give the order to attack by the actions of the redcoats, who had begun pulling on the rope around Dick's neck, at an order from the captain.

Then Bob had given the order, in a low, eager voice, and the youths leaped out of the timber and advanced toward the redcoats at the top of their speed.

Dick saw and recognized his brave "Liberty Boys" on the instant.

His heart leaped with delight.

"You will not hang me, after all!" cried Dick, a smile of triumph on his face; "here are my brave 'Liberty Boys' to the rescue, now!"

CHAPTER IX.

A CHASE AND A STRUGGLE.

"Surrender!" cried Bob in a loud, commanding voice; "you are outnumbered five to one and it will be useless for you to try to escape. Surrender!"

The redcoats had started to flee, but when they saw how many of the newcomers there were, they seemed to realize that they stood but little chance of escaping and came to a stop.

At this instant the "Liberty Boys" who had been left at the other side of the clearing, emerged from the timber and came running toward the redcoats, brandishing their weapons in the air.

This settled it.

The redcoats realized that they were in a trap from which there was no escape.

They were outnumbered at least five to one and to attempt to escape would be to lose their lives.

"We surrender," they cried; "don't shoot."

The "Liberty Boys" closed in upon the redcoats and called upon them to throw down their arms.

The redcoats obeyed—with one exception.

That exception was the captain.

Watching his opportunity he suddenly hurled a couple of

the "Liberty Boys" aside and bounding away with the speed of a deer, disappeared in the timber.

"Quick! Cut me loose!" cried Dick.

Bob leaped forward and cut Dick's bonds.

"Jove! I'm glad we were able to rescue you, Dick," Bob cried. "I believe the scoundrels would have hanged you!"

"They certainly would have done so, Bob; you came to my aid just in the nick of time! But now I'm off; I must capture that fellow; he is a captain and of more importance than all the rest put together; tell the boys to stay here till we come back and then follow me."

"All right, Dick."

Without words, Dick leaped away and disappeared in the edge of the timber at the point where the captain had entered it.

Bob remained behind long enough to tell the youths to bind the prisoners' arms and remain where they were till he and Dick returned and then he leaped away and followed Dick.

The redcoat captain ran with all his might.

He was determined to make his escape if such a thing was possible.

"I ought to be able to do it, all right," he thought; "in these thick woods and in the darkness, it ought to be possible for me to get away in safety."

But the captain was dealing with no common youths.

Dick and Bob were wonderfully fast runners.

Their wind was perfect, too, and they could run for hours, if necessary, while with the redcoat it was different.

He was not used to such strenuous physical exertion.

The result was that he was soon puffing at a great rate.

"Jove! I wouldn't have believed that it was such hard work to run as all this," he muttered; "if they should follow me and could keep on my track, I fear they would overtake me; perhaps I had better try to find some place where I can hide."

The captain kept a lookout as he went along, in the hope that he would find some place of concealment.

But in this he was disappointed.

"It may be that they did not follow me at all," he thought presently; "in that case, there is no need of my running myself to death; I'll stop and listen a moment."

The captain did so.

At first he heard nothing.

He was just about to congratulate himself when a sound came to his ears which caused him to give a start and utter a low exclamation.

"There is someone in pursuit of me, after all," he muttered; "possibly there are half a dozen of them; at any rate, it will be folly for me to stop and try to show fight;

I must keep on running and escape in that way if such a thing is possible."

The captain resumed his flight.

He lumbered onward through the timber and underbrush at his best speed.

He was a novice at this kind of work and realized it.

"Jove! I make more noise than a team of horses," he muttered; "those fellows will be able to keep track of me without much trouble, I am afraid."

The redcoat was right about this.

Dick had very keen hearing.

He heard the crashing sounds made by the fugitive in plunging through the underbrush and was enabled to keep track of him in this way.

Occasionally Dick gave utterance to a peculiar, quavering whistle.

This was a signal to Bob and a guide, so that he would know which way to come.

Onward plunged the redcoat.

After him came Dick, and behind Dick came Bob.

It was a peculiar chase.

It was rather an exciting one, too, but Dick had very little doubt regarding the ultimate outcome of the chase.

He was confident that he would overtake and capture the fugitive.

He was determined to do so.

Dick had taken a cordial dislike to the captain and would much rather that all the other redcoats should escape than that this man should do so.

"I'll catch him!" the youth murmured grimly! "I must and will catch him; he shall not escape me!"

The crashing sound grew louder and plainer.

"I'm overhauling him rapidly," thought Dick; "I will be up with him before many more minutes."

He increased his speed, anxious to terminate the affair as speedily as possible.

Louder and louder grew the crashing sounds.

The timber was more open here, and presently Dick caught sight of the fugitive.

"Ah! I have you now, my fine fellow!" murmured Dick, and he leaped forward at increased speed.

By the time another hundred yards had been traversed, Dick was within fifty feet of the fleeing redcoat.

As a matter of precaution, Dick drew a pistol and held it in readiness for instant use.

He did not know but that the fugitive might turn upon him at any moment.

The man might be desperate enough to show fight, after all.

Closer and closer Dick drew to the fugitive.

When he was within twenty feet of the redcoat Dick called out:

"You might as well stop, my dear captain; I am right at your heels and you cannot possibly get away."

The redcoat looked back over his shoulder, saw that Dick was close upon him, and noting, also, that there was only the one, he stopped suddenly and whirling bounded toward the youth with the ferocity of a tiger.

Dick could have shot the captain dead, but as the man made no attempt to draw a weapon, the youth could not bring himself to fire.

Waiting till the redcoat was within six feet of him, Dick dropped his pistol and closed with the man.

An exclamation of satisfaction escaped the lips of the redcoat as he felt Dick within his grasp.

"Aha! I have you now, you young scoundrel!" the captain cried in fiendish delight; "I'll kill you as sure as I am a living man! I'll choke the life out of you."

"Brag is a good dog, but holdfast is better," retorted Dick; "perhaps it will be as well to wait till this affair is over before crowing too loudly."

"Bah! I can handle you and not half try."

"Perhaps so, but I doubt it," was Dick's quiet reply.

Then ensued a terrible struggle.

The captain, as Dick soon learned, was no mean antagonist.

He was strong and being a comparatively young man, was quick and active as well.

But if Dick was surprised, so was the captain.

When he succeeded in getting Dick in his grasp, he thought he had the game in his own hands, but he quickly discovered his mistake.

To his amazement he discovered that Dick was fully as strong as himself and he discovered further that the youth was as active and supple as a tiger and well versed in the wrestler's art.

The captain knew something about wrestling himself, and for a time, the struggle between the two was a very pretty contest, and seemingly a very equal one.

The exertion from running through the timber had tired the captain more than it had Dick, however, and the strain which he was now undergoing told on him quickly.

Dick was not long in securing the hold which he wished to get, and suddenly the redcoat's heels flew up in the air; over went the redcoat and down upon his back with a thud, Dick falling upon him with such force as to almost knock the breath out of the man's body.

At this moment, Bob, panting and almost breathless, arrived upon the scene.

"I have him tight and fast, Bob," said Dick, quietly;

"I'll turn him over on his face and hold him while you bind his arms."

"All right, Dick."

In one minute's time the redcoat was bound and helpless.

CHAPTER X.

A BIT OF SPY WORK.

"So you thought you would escape, did you?" remarked Dick, rising and looking down upon his prisoner.

A curse was the only reply.

"Oh, no doubt you feel disappointed," the youth said, quietly.

Then he took hold of the captain and lifted.

"Get up," he commanded.

The redcoat hesitated.

At first he seemed on the point of rebelling and refusing to get up, but presently he thought better of it.

He struggled to his feet.

Then Dick took hold of one of his arms, Bob the other, and they marched the prisoner back through the timber in the direction of the clearing.

They walked along in silence for a few minutes, and then the redcoat addressed Dick.

"Are you really Dick Slater?" he asked.

"I am really Dick Slater," the youth replied, with a smile; "you wouldn't believe me when I told you so, back in the clearing awhile ago."

"No; more fool I!" was the bitter reply; "had I done so, and gotten away from the place with you a prisoner, I would be all right now, instead of a prisoner."

"You are wrong," said Bob. "You could not have gotten away."

"Why not?"

"For the reason that the 'Liberty Boys' would not have let you do so; we followed your party from the river, and to the clearing, and were there all the time."

The captain gave utterance to a grunt of disgust.

The three walked steadily onward, and fifteen minutes later they arrived at the cabin.

The "Liberty Boys" were waiting patiently for them.

The prisoners, with their hands securely bound, were seated on the ground, and the youths had formed a circle around them, making any attempt at escape impossible.

The youths set up a shout as the three appeared.

"They caught him!"

"I knew they would!"

"So did I."

"I knew there was no use for the redcoat to try to get away!"

"That's right; he couldn't possibly get away from Dick and Bob!"

Such were a few of the exclamations from the "Liberty Boys."

The redcoats looked glum.

They were evidently disappointed, and had been hoping that their captain would succeed in escaping.

As soon as the captain had taken his place among his comrades, Dick called Bob to one side.

"I want you and the boys to take the prisoners and return to Valley Forge," said Dick.

"All right; but what are you going to do?" asked Bob.

"I shall go on my way to Philadelphia."

"Why, haven't you been there yet?" asked Bob in surprise.

"No."

"Then where have you been all this time?"

Then Dick told Bob what had delayed him.

"So that is it?" Bob remarked when Dick had finished.

"Yes, that is it; and I must go on to Philadelphia and do the work I set out to do."

"All right; we'll take the prisoners to Valley Forge."

"Be careful, and don't let them escape, Bob."

"We won't let them escape, Dick."

The youths returned to where the rest were, and Dick gave the order to place the prisoners on the backs of their horses.

This was done, and then the entire party moved across the clearing.

At the farther side it stopped, and the "Liberty Boys" secured their horses and mounted.

Then the "Liberty Boys" and their prisoners moved forward, along the winding road.

When the main road was reached, Dick bade his comrades goodby, and turned toward the Schuylkill River, while the others turned in the direction of Valley Forge.

"Well, well! This has been rather a lively evening!" thought Dick as he rode onward; "I should have been in Philadelphia long ago, but I do not begrudge the delay, the way it has turned out. I was of benefit to Mr. Bundy and his wife and daughter, and we have succeeded in capturing a score of redcoats. Oh, I guess the delay won't do as much harm as it has done good."

Dick rode steadily onward.

He was soon at the river, and crossed without meeting with any adventure.

Then he kept his horse going at a steady gallop, and two hours later he entered Philadelphia, having managed to enter the city without being interfered with in any way.

Dick had been here before, and he left his horse at a livery stable, and then made his way to a tavern and secured a room for the night.

As it was late, he went to bed at once.

He was up bright and early next morning, and was out on the streets as soon as he had finished his breakfast, doing his best to pick up information which might be of benefit to General Washington, the commander-in-chief of the patriot army.

He spent the entire day at this work, and although he was looked at rather sharply by some of the redcoats with whom he conversed, Dick felt sure he had not created any suspicion in the minds of the fellows with regard to who he was.

He was out immediately after supper, too, and pursued his investigations energetically.

It was not long before he got into trouble, however.

Dick had approached a little group of redcoats, the members of which were engaged in conversation, and after listening a few moments, he ventured to address a question to one of the men.

It so happened that the redcoat had been drinking, and he resented being addressed by a stranger.

"See here," he growled; "what do you mean by addressing a gentleman to whom you have not been properly introduced? You are insolent, young fellow, did you know that?"

"Why, no, I didn't know it," Dick hastened to say; "I beg your pardon, and I assure you that I had no intention of being impertinent."

"That won't do!" the redcoat growled, "you were insolent, and you have got to answer for it!"

It was evident that the fellow was bent on picking a quarrel with Dick.

The youth realized this, and having no wish to become embroiled in a difficulty with the redcoat, he started to walk away.

The redcoat was not willing to have it so, however, and he seized Dick by the coat collar.

"Just hold on!" the fellow cried; "don't be in a hurry. You wished to talk to me when I had no desire to have you do so, and now I am going to talk to you, whether you like it or not!"

The redcoat gave Dick a jerk as he spoke.

Dick did not like this very well, and he said, calmly:

"Hadn't you better be a bit careful, sir?"

"Careful?—what about?"

"Why, about jerking me around."

The redcoat laughed boisterously.

"Ho, ho, ho!" he roared; "say, that is a good joke! Don't you think so, fellows?" this to his comrades, of whom there were three.

The three said they thought it an extremely good joke.

The redcoat then gave Dick another jerk, harder than before.

Dick maintained his air of calmness.

"If you do that again you will wish that you hadn't!" he remarked in the most master-of-fact tone imaginable.

Again the redcoat roared, and his comrades joined in the merriment.

Then the fellow gave Dick another jerk.

This was the signal for Dick to act.

He saw that he could not get away without a row, and he decided to have it over with as quickly as possible.

He instantly squirmed out of the grasp of the redcoat, and shoved him backward with such force that the fellow reeled and went off the sidewalk into the gutter.

This made him wild with rage.

"You young scoundrel!" he cried; "do you dare lift your hand to me!—to one of the king's soldiers? I'll kill you for that!"

Dick had leaped backward and away from the three redcoats, as he thought it possible they might attack him; but they made no move toward doing so, and all he had to do was to keep his eye on the one man.

As the redcoat in question uttered his threat, he leaped onto the sidewalk and sprang at Dick with the ferocity of a tiger.

He began striking out fiercely and rapidly.

He was soon treated to a surprise, however.

He found that it was an extremely difficult matter to land a blow on the youth, who leaped here and there, dodged, ducked, parried and evaded the blows with seeming ease.

Curses, not loud but deep, escaped the lips of the redcoat, and he redoubled his exertions.

The only effect this had was to make him tired just so much quicker; he was no more successful than before in landing blows on the nimble youth.

Presently the fellow became so tired and winded that he had to pause to catch his breath; his arms, too, seemed to weigh a ton each, and he let them drop to his side.

Fatal mistake!

This was just what Dick had been waiting for, and out shot the youth's right fist with the force of a pile-driver.

The fist, as hard, seemingly, as iron, caught the redcoat fair between the eyes.

Smack!

The fellow was knocked backward, clear off the sidewalk, and was deposited upon his back in the gutter.

The shock of the blow, and the jar of the fall dazed the redcoat, and he lay still and blinked up at the sky, as though he was witnessing a display of stars and meteors—which was perhaps the case.

The fellow's comrades stared in dismay for a few moments, and then they rushed at Dick, eager to avenge the downfall of their friend.

Doubtless they thought that their numbers would enable them to do as they pleased with the youth, but they soon learned their mistake.

Dick met the three more than half way, and for a few moments there was the liveliest kind of a scrimmage; then down the redcoats went, one after another, knocked down by vigorous blows from Dick's fists.

The first redcoat—the one who had picked the quarrel with Dick—was now on his feet, and he rushed at the youth with a snarl of rage.

Dick stopped him with a terrific blow in the chest, just over the heart, and then gave him another, this time on the point of the jaw, and down the redcoat went a second time.

He was knocked senseless this time, and when the other three scrambled to their feet and returned to the attack, Dick was ready for them.

So wildly and fiercely did they rush to the attack, so rapidly did they strike out, that Dick was forced to take a few blows, though he managed it in such a way that they were glancing, and did no particular damage.

Then, when the three had tired themselves out, Dick went in, and the way he punished them was a caution.

He knocked them all about, and ended by sending in three terrific blows which landed the three on their backs in the gutter, in a dazed and senseless condition.

A crowd had collected by this time, and many were the exclamations and remarks indulged in.

"Did you ever see the like?"

"Don't it beat all!"

"What's the trouble?"

"Who are you, young fellow, anyway?"

"You're a wonder, whoever you are!"

"That's right; there are not many who could whip four men, as he has done!"

Such were a few of the remarks, but Dick paid no attention to the speakers.

Instead he moved away from the spot.

"Let me pass, please," he said, when the crowd got in his road, and they let him go through.

Dick wished to get away from the spot as quickly as possible; and he made up his mind to get out of the city, too. He had secured information which he thought would be of value to General Washington, and decided to get back to Valley Forge with it as quickly as possible.

As soon as he was clear of the crowd, he made his way to the livery stable where he had left the horse.

He paid his score, mounted his horse, and rode out and away.

He succeeded in getting out of the city in safety, and then rode onward at a gallop.

"I have done very well, this time," the youth mused; "I have secured some information that ought to be known to the commander-in-chief, and will take it to him; then if he wishes me to return to Philadelphia, I will do so."

Dick had no adventures on the road to Valley Forge, and arrived there safely at about two o'clock in the morning.

He made his way to the cabin where he had his quarters, and throwing himself down in his bunk, was soon asleep.

He slept soundly till morning, and then got up and ate a hearty breakfast.

The other "Liberty Boys" were glad to see Dick back again, and asked him for the story of his adventures in Philadelphia.

He told the story as he ate, and when he had finished he made his way to headquarters, and was ushered into the presence of the commander-in-chief.

General Washington greeted Dick cordially, for he liked the youth.

"So you are back from Philadelphia, eh, Dick?" he remarked; "well, what news?"

Dick immediately told the commander-in-chief what he had learned, and the great man listened attentively.

"You have done well, Dick, my boy," he said when Dick had finished; "the information which you bring will be

of great value to me, as by its aid I shall be enabled to make a good guess as to the intentions of the British."

"I am glad if the information is of a nature that will make it of value to you," said Dick quietly.

"Oh, there is no doubt regarding that, Dick; and now I must congratulate you further on the capture of the twenty redcoats. That was a neat affair, as it turned out—though as I understand it, things looked rather dark for you for a while?"

"Yes," replied Dick; "my 'Liberty Boys' put in an appearance just in the nick of time, as it were. I really believe that redcoat captain intended to hang me."

"I have no doubt whatever regarding the matter. Well, the shoe is on the other foot, now. We could hang him if we desired, but I think that I shall exchange him instead."

"Yes, that will be more satisfactory, I judge," agreed Dick.

"It will be more satisfactory to the captain, without doubt," smiled the commander-in-chief.

Later on the captain and his twenty men were exchanged

for an equal number of patriot soldiers who were held prisoners by the British.

Dick visited the Dundys several times while the patriot army remained at Valley Forge, and was a most welcome visitor, as may well be supposed.

THE END.

The next number (43) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' BIG DAY; OR, DOING BUSINESS BY THE WHOLESALE," by Harry Moore.

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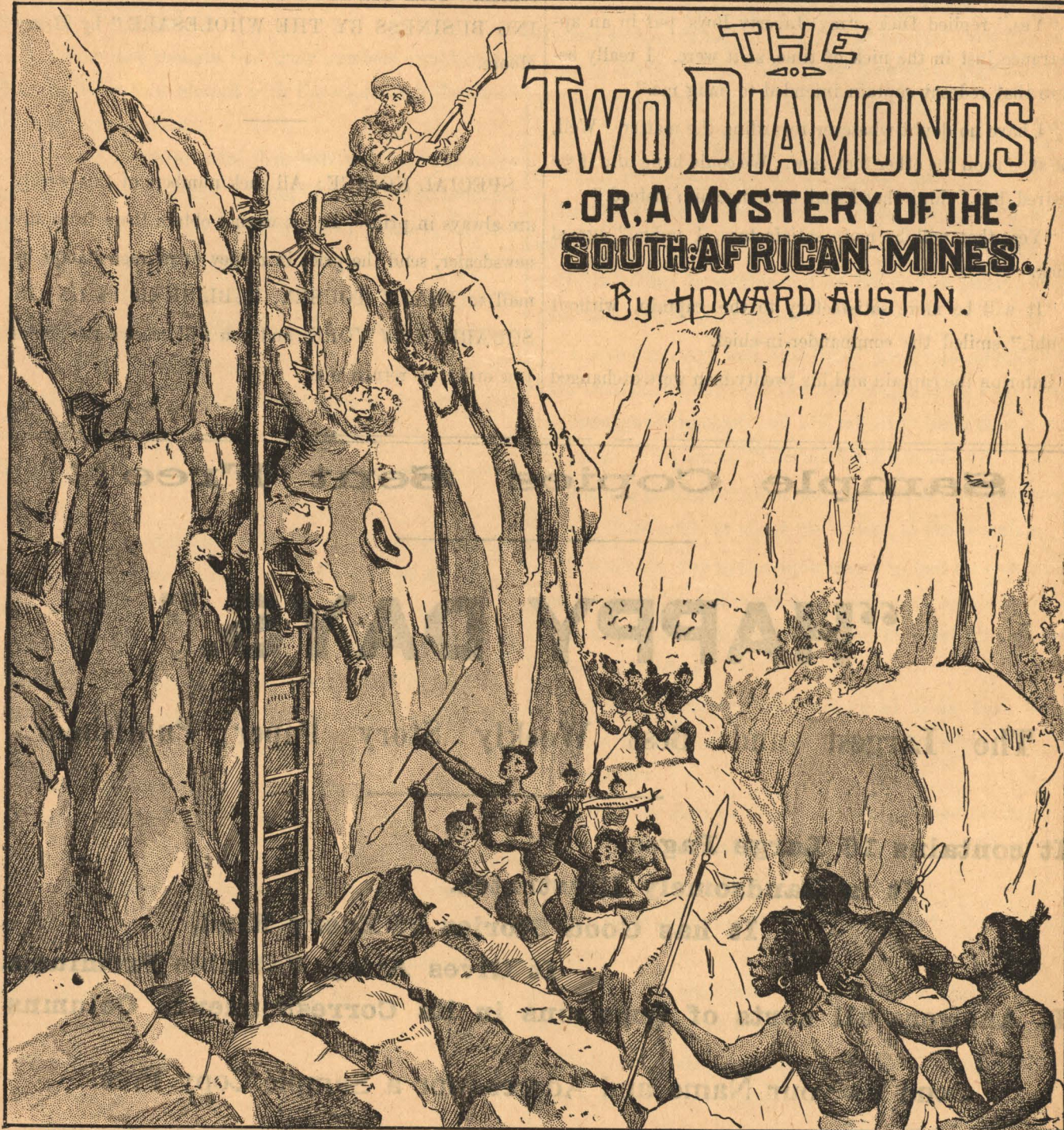
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